

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Tree Spring Pipeline Reroute
NEPA Register Number DOI-BLM-V060-2014-007-EA
U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management, Vale District
100 Oregon Street, Vale, Oregon 97918
<http://www.blm.gov/or/districts/vale/plans/index.php>

Introduction

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has completed an Environmental Assessment (EA, No. DOI-BLM-V060-2014-007-EA) that analyzes two alternatives for this project. The purpose of this proposal is to supply water for livestock and wildlife to an existing trough located in the Winter Area North pasture of the Eiguren allotment. The need for the action is to relocate the pipeline to reduce maintenance costs and eliminate the potential damages by wildfire and the negative effects of the sun's ultra-violet radiation on unburied pipe.

The alternatives analyzed in the EA are a no action alternative to maintain the existing pipeline in its current location, and an action alternative to reroute a portion of the pipeline to a more desirable location within the Eiguren Allotment (No. 11305).

The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations state that the significance of impacts must be determined in terms of both context and intensity (40 CFR 1508.27). These are described below.

Context

The project is a site-specific action directly involving approximately 1.5 miles of BLM administered public land that does not in and of itself have international, national, regional, or state-wide importance.

The Eiguren Allotment (11305) is an individual allotment with an active grazing preference of 5,799 active animal unit months (AUMs). The season of use is from 03/05 to 11/30. Livestock grazing will not change as a result of the proposed or alternative actions.

Livestock water in the Winter Area North pasture is supplied by two livestock watering troughs on the Tree Spring pipeline system. Only one of these troughs is reliable annually during the grazing period. It is the intent of the proposed action to provide reliable water to an existing livestock watering trough in this pasture to enable better grazing distribution.

Intensity

I have considered the potential intensity and severity of the impacts anticipated from the implementation of a Decision on this EA relative to each of the ten areas suggested for consideration by the CEQ. With regard to each:

- 1. Would any of the alternatives have significant beneficial or adverse impacts (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(1)? No.**

Rationale: The alternatives included tradeoffs between beneficial and adverse impacts. None of the effects would be potentially significant, due to the limited area impacted by maintaining or rerouting the pipeline.

Beneficial impacts from alternative 2 (re-route and burying) would include: improved grazing distribution in the pasture, a lower level of surface disturbance, reduced maintenance requirements, and shelter the pipeline from damage caused by future wildfires and the effects of the sun. A summary of the effects is presented in section 7 of the EA.

2. Would any of the alternatives have significant adverse impacts on public health and safety (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(2)? No.

Rationale: None of the actions in any of the alternatives would have any effect on human health or safety because none of the actions have a dangerous or hazardous component, nor will they be generated by the actions. Appropriate safety precautions will be required for any field operations.

3. Would any of the alternatives have significant adverse impacts on unique geographic characteristics (cultural or historic resources, park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas (ACECs, RNAs, significant caves)) (40 CFR 1508.27 (b)(3)? No.

Rationale: The affected area does not include any unique geographic characteristics.

4. Would any of the alternatives have highly controversial effects (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(4)? No.

Rationale: There are no known controversial effects related to the alternatives. Greater Sage-Grouse are a candidate species under the Endangered Species Act. Sage-Grouse habitat is present in the project area. This project would have no adverse impact to either Sage-Grouse or its habitat.

5. Would any of the alternatives have highly uncertain effects or involve unique or unknown risks? No.

Rationale: There are no uncertain effects or unique or unknown risks associated with this project. All effects are described in Chapter 7 of the EA.

6. Would any of the alternatives establish a precedent for future actions with significant impacts (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(6)? No.

Rationale: The effects for all actions in these alternatives are common for public land management and would not set a precedent for future actions.

7. Are any of the alternatives related to other actions with potentially significant cumulative impacts (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(7)? No.

Rationale: In no instance would the effects of this project, combined with other management activities, produce a significant cumulative effect.

8. **Would any of the alternatives have significant adverse impacts on scientific cultural or historic resources, including those listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Resources (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(8)? No.**

Rationale: There are no cultural resources in the project area. A thorough field reconnaissance of the Area of Proposed Effects (APE) was completed on February 27, 2014. The objective of the survey was locating, recording, and evaluating any physical evidence of historical significance. The field survey consisted of a pedestrian cultural resource inventory of 100 percent of the APE. No sites were located.

9. **Would any of the alternatives have significant adverse impacts on threatened or endangered species or their critical habitat (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(9)? No.**

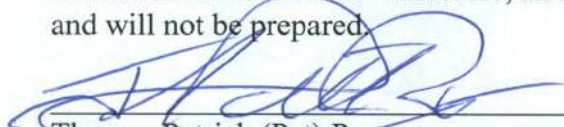
Rationale: There are no known threatened or endangered species present in the project area, and no critical habitat is present. However, Greater Sage-Grouse are a candidate species under the Endangered Species Act. The new route traverses 0.4 miles of Preliminary General Habitat (PGH) for the Sage-Grouse, which is very similar to the existing route. The potential impacts to Sage-Grouse are similar when comparing the original pipeline to the new route. No negative impacts would result by rerouting this portion of the Tree Spring Pipeline.

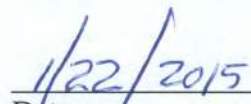
10. **Would any of the alternatives have effects that threaten to violate Federal, State, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(10)? No.**

Rationale: None of the alternatives would have effects that threaten to violate any laws.

Finding

On the basis of the information contained in the EA, the consideration of the intensity factors described above, and all other information available to me, it is my determination that: (1) the alternatives are in conformance with the Southeastern Oregon Resource Management Plan; and (2) none of the alternatives would constitute a major federal action having a significant effect on the human environment. Therefore, an EIS or supplement to the existing EIS is not necessary and will not be prepared.


Thomas Patrick (Pat) Ryan
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Vale District BLM


Date